

8/8/71

Dear Js,

One of my wonderful young friends is weekendening here, which makes a considerable change in my working capabilities. Something he wanted of me took just about all the time I had yesterday. He was here two weeks ago when I got a rejection from the lawyer for the Merv Griffin Show when I made an equal-time demand. I had drafted a short, formal response, intending to then go to the FCC. He was not satisfied with my letter, asked me to hold off until he could draft one, I agreed, he got busy with hard work and hard fun and didn't finish what he wanted me to say until 4 a.m. Friday, came down from New York afterward, getting here at what would have been bedtime, thus delayed for two-hours of talk, and I reoriented his approach, worked in a new decision, and did it. Lil will type it today. I felt I had to, with all the effort he had gone to, but the argument will do not good when the decision is policy rather than legal. I'll send a copy. And now I'll have to become my own lawyer in a new aspect of the law. Today I'll do the same thing with Cavett. So, while he and Lil are still asleep, I write to tell you how much I enjoyed your letter of the 3rd.

Oh, yes, the fine kid is also preparing an article for Computers. Ordinarily I would have opposed it. But because he has already done so much work on it, in this case I agreed. He will be going after the NYTimes on what it has done to ax books on the political assassinations. That is a record that should be made, and no matter how minor the magazine, publication does make a record. If I had anyone who could take the case, I'd sue the Times, feeling that they have been so excessive with me that they have crossed the malice line. If I can find a young lawyer in Washington willing to do it on prospects, we can sue them there - or anywhere the "do business".

As soon as I read your letter I interrupted Lil and gave it to her. We both benefitted much from this short course on China. I suppose it was especially enjoyable because it told us that what he believed without knowing really why is true, because it gave us so much detail of which we had no idea, and because you took the time. I wish I had time for further discussion of it, but were I to ask you more about those things of which I'd like to know more, that also would entice you to spend time you do not have. I have arranged a few beneficial intrusions into my own writing day, one of which I'll do as soon as I finish writing this. And it has turned out to be goo. I take a brisk walk every morning. That is, unless it is raining hard. I began doing it for physical therapy. As have aged at an accelerated pace for about two-three years, and it has disturbed me. I didn't even begin to age until then, as Hal can tell you. Those younger ones who met me at the airports couldn't handle what I did, and of all those who used to help me in many ways, Hal is the only one who could keep the hours. In fact, I think I can date the beginning of my awareness with two things: seeing myself walk up onto the platform the night I taped the confrontation with Liebler on the Les Crane Shaw, at the wearier end of one of these sleepless trips and that after an almost sleepless night before; and the night I couldn't hold my eyes open when I visited you. At first I tended to attribute this to the fact that I was with friends and could relax, but it gradually dawned on me that it was the telling of time. So, where at the beginning of decent weather I felt I had to return home after walking to the first crossroads, a third of a mile away, a month ago I was walking twice as fast at least and two miles, all steeply up, like where you live. Fast as I could, almost naked (shorts and zoris only). After that, coming downhill was no cinch. An hour of this, a quick dip, sometimes a glance at the front page, and it felt good and I was alert for work. Then the dogs came, all those people just won't restrain. After two of them came on me from behind, undetected, one just missing biting my left heel from the back because I made an uncalculated jump to the left because of traffic and three German police came upon me when I was almost as far away as I got and pooped, much of the fund left, for the relaxation left. There has been an interesting and mildly worthwhile byproduct. We have ultra-reactionary local papers with which I have good relations. As you have probably observed, those who want to be reporters tend to try and start with small, local papers unless they have

connections. There is a local ordinance about dogs, and those city people take into the country to drop when they no longer want to keep them revert to the wild and become killers, running in packs like wolves. They do much damage to stock. After my second experience, I went to the local barracks of the state police, which referred me to a minor official I didn't know we have, a dog warden. He turned out to be a very decent, harried, unlettered and quite conscientious man. He came promptly, we took a ride in his truck, he left notes where I knew dogs were loose, confronted the woman where those German police are (and I saw how frustrating his work can be, for she paid no attention), so, I called the papers having learned more of the problem from him. They did a fine story, page-one'd it, he phoned with great appreciation and told me that the night before he had worked until 9 p.m., that day's take being 57 dogs, not one licensed. I again phoned the paper and this was followed by a fine lead editorial. When I phoned to thank the city editor ~~xx~~ of the evening paper, a fellow I have known for some years, he told me on the o.t. that it is the beginning of something a number of the younger staffers have gotten together on, trying to get a little more citizen participation in public concerns. That is radical for here. It was also the focus of the editorial.

But can you imagine the difference in my walks when I have to carry a canister of mace and have been talking an old single-shot .22? Now I've gotten a holster for an old, fine (collector's item) Savage .32 automatic, and as soon as I can find time to clean the old bullets, I'll be taking that instead. And I will again be taking my extended walk and again be trying to stretch each day's a little more. I need it. While I hate to shoot anything, have never hunted, preferring instead to enjoy and help the wildlife (we even have quail coming to the house to eat all winter, rabbits so tame they are a problem and bass and trout that come when they hear the human voice and lay there and look, something nobody believes until they see it), I simply can't permit my own life to be inhibited by the negligence of the uncaring or the viciousness of their "pets". If I am seen with this weapon some of them may come to know I am serious. And if I kill one or more of the dogs who should not live in freedom, that may restrain the owners of the others. Hell of a thing to have to keep in mind just to get some exercise and relaxation. I also use this time for two other things: thinking and listening to the DC all-news stations on an old but small, practically worn out transistor am/fm. In high school, when I wrote last-minute copy in the composing room of the local Sunday paper and made up our high-school paper, I learned to think with loud intrusions, so I can "listen" to the radio with my mind not heeding it, but captured by the first word of what I want to hear.

I'm rambling. You SF Chron 7/18 on the PP and China came at a remarkable time. That story was ignored. But when the Wash Post repeated it yesterday, p. 1., it got a major play everywhere, including electronic. You'd never know from the Post that the Detroit News had broken the same thing three weeks earlier. There may be some interesting developments at the Post with changes in managing editors. I have planned something for two weeks, and if I do it, I'll carbon you.

That story on dropping the charges against Sheridan now tells me that time and suffering have been wasted in N.O. I think I have a carbon of the letter I sent Ivon. What you report from the French magazine (have you a copy) on loyalty is no exaggeration. It is one of the strange complexities, one of the more frustrating I've had to deal with in the past, given JG's penchant for imparting most trust in the least worthy. I think I should carry my Gervais analysis a bit further: he contrived an indefiniteness in the conversations which make the tapes much less valuable, anything but definitive on JG, unless DJ is holding much back, which is possible. Gervais will make a book. He would make a special kind of TV show I can't define to those who are unfamiliar with the boobery. There is one special show that is remarkably anti-racist by having a racist for its central character. That kinda cop.... Another of my young friends persuaded me to write Bailey and offer to help. Did. No answer. Seems like I'm doomed to ribbon trouble. As you can see, it just happened on the machine I was loaned while the Hermes is being checked. The Hermes trouble has been isolated and is the first time in my dealer's experience. Ribbon jumps out of guides.

Occam; think I gave this to Lil to copy. Will try not to forget. However, with all this time past and nothing from the Senators' offices on what I'd asked them to get from the Library of Congress, which will supply on simple, phoned request, much as I'd like to, I feel that with this attitude it is not the best way to use limited time and I've done nothing further. I find that attitude incredible. I've never known an necrophiliac, so I'm impressed with what you say. The R.S.P. suggestion came from a Bantam editor, a friend, to whom I've suggested a collaboration on a political novel with any writer he believes could do it. He has a black one in mind, a man who has seen the message and is fascinated. When I can I propose filing an FOI action vs CIA, and I'll then compare NYT text with official. Thanks.

On the JFK-PP v-pids, I think this business will be used to depersonalize/blame JFK, for the changes he was determined to bring about are not desired. I agree with that Frankel piece. Have you a copy. It really traces, overtly, to Churchill's Fulton, Mo. speech. I'd like to know who swung that deal. ...Part of the PP void on China, I think, is due to our proclivity for dealing with symptoms rather than causes, part because it was the visible and comprehensible, part because so very few understood what it happened. You be surprised at my source when you see TIGER.... Your not having a TV; aside from having Pacifica, you also see wire copy I don't. We do look at the news, when we eat, so it takes no time, and it does tell us what we would otherwise not know, inadequate as TV reporting is. However, there sometimes is very good stuff. Basically, it is as you know from the papers, the reporters sometimes wanting to do what management doesn't and sometimes getting to do it. There have been a few Nixon press conferences well worth it (and they have been so much more infrequent since, if you've noticed)...CB transceiver: there is no dependable dope available to me here. The local dealers merely want to sell at highest possible price. One of the things I'd like to know is if I have close to line-of-sight, with trees alone blocking, if less than maximum power would be dependable for less than five miles by air, perhaps three, maybe four, to elevated tower which Sheriff has downtown. I'm up.... I have no attic. House has flat roof. ...Post clippings: these are no extra work. Usually they are what Lil thinks will interest me. I rarely take time to scan paper. I read it when she is working. So, they are already clipped. If I want any returned, I'll indicate....Jennifer and transcribing: understood. No surprise. She does an enormous amount of work...I've gotten Lil up, my guest is shaving, and I'll have to quit to breakfast, walk and then work. May thanks.

Best,